

REMARKS

In part 12 of the Office Action Summary, none of the boxes are checked. However, applicants filed a certified copy of the priority document on 17 October 2003, as indicated on the filing transmittal for this application. The applicants respectfully request acknowledgement of the claim for priority under section 119 and notice that the certified copy of the priority document has been received.

The applicants thank the examiner for having returned an initialed copy of the PTO 1449 that was submitted on 17 October 2003 and of the PTO 1449 that was submitted on 7 September 2004.

Claims 1 - 2 and 8 - 21 are pending. Non-elected claims 3 - 7 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. The applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application based upon the canceled claims. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,801,352 to Taneda *et al.* (hereafter: "Taneda"). The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite novel features associated with an exemplary embodiment described, for example, on pgs. 8 - 12 of an output characteristic switching method for switching an output characteristic of a sensor device. Reference numerals are included only to aid discussion. The sensor device 2 receives a power supply voltage and outputs a detecting signal during a first sensing interval according to a first output characteristic or a second output characteristic. According to the method, a function of a terminal 8 of the sensor device is switched from receiving the power supply voltage and outputting the detecting signal to

inputting a command signal during an input interval. The output characteristics of the sensor device are switched to the one of the first output characteristic and the second output characteristic during a second sensing interval based on the command signal received through the terminal during the input interval. For example, referring to the illustration in Fig. 2, when data sent from the microcomputer 20 to the terminal 8 is "00" in binary number, low pressure can be detected by using the characteristic line L1. Further, when the data sent from the microcomputer 20 is "01" in binary number, high pressure can be detected by using the characteristic line L2.

Thus, in accordance with the invention and unlike conventional systems, a mode switch is accomplished without the need for a separate mode switching terminal. Further, the output characteristic is switched based on the reception of a command signal input to the terminal, which terminal reverts back to generating an output in accordance with the other output characteristic. In such a way, a device that receives the output characteristic can easily know the underlying value, such as, for example, pressure, with high precision.

Taneda, at best, describes a power supply unit for a discharge apparatus in which a gate voltage of a FET is controlled to increase ON resistance and prevent saturation when an increase in voltage is detected. Thus, a control operation for clamping an output voltage and for stopping the increase is performed. However, Taneda fails to disclose switching a function of a terminal of a sensor device from receiving power supply voltage and outputting the detection signal to inputting a command signal during an input interval. Rather, Taneda merely describes clamping and output during the stand-by time when inverted amplification (feedback) via a resistor in an operational amplifier is being carried out so that a constant state of feedback is maintained by the diodes. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) should be withdrawn.

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,344,492 to Hirano.

Hirano describes a weight machine including sensors 29 for detecting the weight of articles on the cradle 23 to produce an electric signal W indicative of the weight and applied through a zero correction device 31 to a central control unit 33 (See col. 3, lines 20 - 30). During operation, the zero point correction system puts the input weight signal of the adder circuit 43 at zero level when the weighing cradle is in a vacant state.

The examiner has pointed to Figs. 1 - 2 and claim 1 of Hirano in support of the rejection without specifying which portions allegedly disclose the recited limitations. However, Figs. 1- 2 and claim 1 of Hirano do not disclose switching a function of a terminal of the sensor device from receiving the power supply voltage and outputting the detecting signal to inputting a command signal during an input interval. Rather, claim 1 merely describes output terminals of combination control means coupled to control terminal of switches, and discharging content from the output terminals for a predetermined period of time (See col. 7, lines 24 - 25 and 35 - 36). No command signal is input to the output terminals of the combination control means. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1 - 2 should be withdrawn.

New claims 8 - 21 are presented for examination. These claims recite features that further distinguish the present invention from the art of record. Support for new claims 8 - 21 can be found on, for example, pgs. 8 - 12 and in Fig. 3.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

If there are any problems with the payment of fees, please charge any underpayments and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kerry S. Culpepper", written over a horizontal line.

Kerry S. Culpepper

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